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THE TORNADO TRACK OF TWO TYPEWRITERS

The Trenton Typewriter Who Stirred Up a State.

A TYPEWRITER'S error of a single word has stirred up the whole State of New Jersey.

The Governor has been forced to take action. He has called the legislators together in extra session.

From all parts of the State they must come to Trenton, the capital, to repair the damage done by a few strokes of a woman's fingers on the keys of a typewriting instrument.

Their assembling may cost the State $500 or $5,000, according to the length of their deliberations. They may or may not vote as they voted before. In fact, there's no telling what may happen, just because Miss Margaret Williams wrote the word "provided" instead of "prohibited" in the copy of a document that the lawmakers were to pass upon.

How did this strange thing happen?

Simply enough. New Jersey is trying to turn over a new leaf—to reform its morals. New Jersey wishes to do away with race tracks and pool selling and kindred heinous offences. To this end an anti-gambling bill was drafted by Lawyer Frank Bergen, of Elizabeth, at the request of Senator Foster Voorhees. Mr. Bergen prepared the bill covering proposed reforms of the constitution, but left vacant places for the amendments which the Legislature was discussing. Several of these amendments were passed at the eleventh hour.

Mr. G. W. Maguire, the Dairy Commissioner of New Jersey, has an office in the State House, at Trenton. He has also a very capable, painstaking typewriter and stenographer. It was quite natural that in this legislative extremity Mr. Bergen should turn to the aid nearest at hand. Mr. Bergen took his bill to Mr. Maguire's typewriter. He had carefully pasted in the printed amendments in their proper places. The typewriter wrote the entire bill out in shorthand at his dictation. It contained this section, which was to clinch the nails in the coffin lid of the gambling demon:

"No lottery shall be authorized by the Legislature or otherwise in this State; and no ticket in any lottery shall be bought or sold within this State, nor shall pool selling, bookmaking or gambling of any kind be authorized or allowed within this State, nor shall any gambling device, practice or game of chance now prohibited by law be legalized, or the remedy, penalty or punishment now provided therefor be in any way diminished."

Miss Williams wrote "provided" for "prohibited" when she copied out her notes on the typewriter, and, though the copy seems to have been read afterward by pretty nearly everybody in the State, the error passed unnoticed.

Some distinguished authorities were of the opinion that it legalized gambling; others that it didn't legalize or prohibit anything, and so at last it was decided that the solons must get together again and fix the matter up. If they would do that and nothing else the State could get out of it for $250 or $300, but the chances are against such an issue. Several Assemblymen are determined to seize the opportunity to make a fight for pet measures. And the longer they fight the more it will cost the State. And there's a girl in New Jersey who is very much worried about it.

Margaret Williams, the fair author of all this devastation, is the daughter of John Williams, a well-known citizen of Trenton. She has been employed by Mr. Macguire for four years in the Dairy Commissioner's office. She has been known as a particularly careful and conscientious worker. Mr. Bergen and Miss Williams read over the bill and compared her copy with the original, and noticed no error. The bill was also read by Senators Voorhees and Smith, who did not discover the mistake. The law was passed without reading, and went into the hands of the engrossing clerks.

Miss Margaret Williams is not a sweet young woman of eighteen, nor yet a beauty of the Ada Rehan type, as has been described by those who have not seen her during the past week. She is a tall, slim young woman, with a wholesome, sensible, truthful face.

"I have not the slightest idea how I made the error," she sadly said. "Mr. Bergen and I went over the original bill and my copy carefully, and we saw no such mistake."

She exhibited signs of dismay when a reference was made to the absurd stories that she had been a tool of the race track people.

"Permit me to tell you," said the suave and courteous Dairy Commissioner, Mr. Maguire, who was present during the interview, "that Miss Williams's ideas are quite Puritanical."

"You do not like horse racing, Miss Williams?" asked the writer.

"I most decidedly do not," was the reply.

"Do you disapprove of it?"

"I do. I would most gladly see the race track swept from the soil of New Jersey."

"You are quoted in some of the New York papers as saying 'I'm a lover of horse racing.' Have you said that?"

The girl gave a little cry of dismay. "I have never said that. I have never made the remarks attributed to me by some newspapers. I simply made a mistake. That's all there is to it.

The Chicago Typewriter Who Closed Down a Bank.

THE ruin of a great university and the wreck of a great bank lie at the feet of Sarah Louise Ervin, typewriter. In the background looms an abandoned family and a deserted home. And to complete the picture you see an old man of sixty through the bars of a prison cell.

Men have blasted their lives before this for an infatuation. The deserted home and the prison cell are therefore not such startling items in this case of Sarah Louise Ervin. But in all the history of crime and faithlessness, there is probably no other case where a woman caused the wiping out of the university of a great State and the demolition of a wealthy banking institution at the same time that she caused the other damage.

The facts are simple enough. Ten years ago Charles Warren Spalding was a wholesale coal dealer in Chicago. He had a good business, a fair social position, and was happy and contented in his domestic relations. His children were all grown, and his life promised to roll on smoothly to the end.

Then came the typewriter.

She was the daughter of a poor carpenter, who had had more than his share of hard luck. The family had moved to Chicago from the little town of Macomb in Illinois in 1873, a year after the great fire and four years after Sarah's birth. Somehow the girl managed to pick up a knowledge of typewriting. She knew little besides, for her opportunities to secure an education had been limited enough. Through sheer good luck the carpenter's daughter got a position at a small salary with Spalding & Mitchell, the coal firm, of which the old man who is now in prison was the head.

From the very beginning Spalding must have become deeply interested with the girl, who was then 18 years old. She had been in his employ four years when he proposed to her father to send her to Radcliffe College, the woman's annex at Harvard. Even then the coal dealer must have planned the separation from his family which came four years later, in 1895.

The typewriter's father was delighted at the offer. He saw in it a possible chance of escape from the hard times he had always known. Spalding, while not tremendously wealthy at that time, was, from the carpenter's standpoint, a Croesus.

Sarah entered Radcliffe in 1891. For two years she pursued a "special" course at the college, and her record shows that she studied hard and with good results.

Her schooling finished, she returned to Chicago. Here things had changed. Her protector had widened the scope of his business enterprise, and was becoming a factor in the industrial history of the lakeside city. He organized the Globe Savings Bank, and Miss Ervin was installed as his private secretary when she returned from Cambridge. Her brother was made a messenger in the bank and afterward assistant cashier. Her father got a comfortable post at a good salary as watchman. Spalding, now a bank president, built a fine house for the typewriter and her family.

Matters came to a climax when Miss Ervin retired from the bank for the purpose, it was announced, to devote herself entirely to the work of getting out a history of the Spalding family that the banker was writing. In due time the volume appeared, a gorgeous book, with a steel plate of the banker as the frontispiece. But the money from this source was an inconsiderable item in Miss Ervin's income. How she obtained the money for her large expenses and the considerable investments she made the girl told in a naive manner when she was examined the other day before the Grand Jury, on whose indictment Spalding had been locked in jail on a charge of wrecking the Globe Bank, and the Illinois University, of which he was treasurer.

"How did you get the money for your expenses?" the prosecuting attorney asked the girl.

"Out of a safety deposit box in the Globe Bank," was her answer.

"Did you ever put any money in that box?"

"No."

"Who had keys to the box?"

"Mr. Spalding and I."

"I understand you acquired some property during the past four years?"

"Yes. I purchased a farm in Idaho and some houses in Juneau Terrace."

"Where did you get the money to buy them?"

"Out of the box in the Globe Bank vaults."

"And you never put any money into it?"

"No; but I could always go there and get money."

"No matter how much you took out to buy houses and farms with, you say the box was never empty?"

"Oh, no; it was never empty."

"I don't suppose you have any idea who put the money in it, have you?"

"No, I can't say that I have."

Which was not so bad for a girl whom the Chicago reporters described as looking like an underfed shop girl, who wore her expensive clothes as if they made her decidedly uncomfortable.

When the crash came it was found that Spalding had somehow made away with about a million dollars, divided equally between the bank and the university of [illegible] the Chronicle.